

Ravenholm Ch1 Sweet Dreams (Half-Life 2)

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Summary: "Do you miss Mommy?" little Emily asked when he was through telling the tale. "More than you will ever know, Precious.", he said as he tried to sniff back the tears and kissed her forehead lovingly. He turned the picture of her mother, still in it's frame, but the glass long gone, more towards them on the nightstand and gazed upon the most beautiful woman in all the world...

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[Male and female voices quarreling]

"We can't leave, they have blockaded us in! There is no way in or out!"

"Maybe if we gave ourselves up, then everyone else would be safe..."

"Oh please! You can't reason with them. They're _aliens_ for God's sake!"

"He's right, it's too late for that now... have you noticed, not even the Combine stuck around... they all just sort of _left_..."

"And radio traffic has completely ceased since yesterday as well. I keep trying, but I can not get a hold of anyone in the other districts. It is as if they are jamming the signal... or maybe there is no one else..."

"The last report we got, was something about a "quarantine"..."

"A _quarantine_? For what!? None of us are sick..."

"Not yet..."

"Oh Shut Up! Don't spread fear, that is what they want! They use it as a weapon all the time!"

"Regardless, this can't be good... I vote we fight our way out!"

"They have us on complete lock down, even the Combine would have trouble getting back in here, much less _us_ out. Even our look outs in the mine said the other exit is blocked as well, there is no escape... There would be torrential bloodshed!"

"Then we shall have it!"

"_Our_ bloodshed you idiot! And our kids wont survive the trek, neither will our elderly! You plan on loading up the van and driving out of here? All that will happen is you hitting that force wall and not allowed to pass if you are lucky. Worse yet they shoot up your vehicle and everyone inside it. Worse still if they allow you to pass..."

"Well I am not leaving my kid behind, you leaving your's or your fathers or mothers!?"

"Daddy...", little Emily called from the doorway, concern in her voice and looking sleepy, she had just woken up from the loud noises of the shouting and came down stairs quietly to investigate, she was carrying her little stuffed kitty with her. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, Sweet Heart..." Jerriid said startled from the kitchen, he had been the last of the group to speak before they were interrupted and people were still bickering on what to do, the idea of at least hiding in the mines was currently discussed, but ultimately turned down as well. If there was biological gas pumped into them, most everyone for sure would die. There was not enough gas masks to go around for the rebels themselves, much less the rest of the town's people. "Now go back to bed Pumpkin.", he said, putting on a smile, but she could see through his facade.

The little girl in her long pajama dress looked on as she rubbed her eyes with one small hand, her other holding onto her stuffed animal. There were a lot of people in the kitchen, both men and women. Some she recognized and some she did not and they all carried guns, lots of them... Everyone was talking loudly in rushed tones arguing and her father had to hush them, becoming alarmed he had woken his daughter.

"I can't sleep... read me a bed time story...", she asked and then when he looked on the verge of telling her no, said in the sweetest possible voice, "pleaassseeee..."

>Jerriid could almost never deny his daughter, especially as of recent..., but there were more pressing issues to be concerned about. Real monsters and boogeymen were lurking about...<p>

"I can't right now, maybe later..."

The little girl knew it was wrong to say, but she wasn't quite herself. "Mommy would if she was here...", she said desperately, pouting.

"_Emily!_", he shouted as he slammed his fist on the table hard enough to jolt everyone into silence, losing his patience, even the mightiest of the bunch were taken a back. "I know she would, but I am not _her!_ And I am busy! Now go to...", but an older gentleman with a kind face put a restraining hand on his shoulder. She easily recognized him as Father Grigori. She use to go to church every Sunday with her parents before the blockade and he was the one on the pulpit giving the sermon and even the one that consummated the marriage of her mother to her current father...

Jerrid turned toward the older man. "Go with your child. Tuck her in and read her a lovely bed time story full of sugar plum fairies and gum drops..." he finished, looking straight into the other man's eyes.

The younger man opened his mouth to protest, but he found there were no words to be said. The clergyman's knowing expression told him what he knew, what they all knew... Tonight might be the last night...

Jerrid turned leaving the group, strolling over to his daughter and scooped her up into his arms, kissing the side of her face lovingly, his way of asking for forgiveness and she wrapped her arms around him, still dangling the kitty and placed her head in the crook of his neck, her way of telling him he was forgiven.

He carried her upstairs, laying her gently in bed. It was an old mattress and getting a bit too small for his growing little girl, but it was all they had. Nothing of great importance had been allowed to come in or out once the Combine came and as of recent, especially with the blockade, not even food or medical supplies was allowed to pass through. Were they planning on starving the town's residence to death...

He covered her up with the blanket that had seen better days and reached for the book of bed time tales with torn leather backing, but she put a hand on his to stop him. "Tell me about Momma...", she pleaded, her eyes so full of innocence and wonder, the same beautiful eyes of her late mother, the colour of the universe to him, hazel... He wished for her never to see bloodshed nor know true fear, but sadly she had already known some. He wanted to protect her and keep the monsters at bay, but he felt that would be impossible...

He weaved the tale of her beautiful mother and told the little one all he knew before he had met her. He did not go over the top with the blood and gore, that was not for little ones and from what he had heard, nor even for men or beast.

Jerrid told her of her birth father from what little he knew, it was kind of a touchy subject. He had been a good man and a leader in the resistance. He died trying to save both his wife and daughter as they escaped the city, she just a little bundle in her mother's arms. Emily was just newly born and a miracle at that. Her mother had gotten pregnant right before the Combine invaded and with in seven hours forced humanity to surrender. Then they put a dampening field around the planet, making it impossible for a man and a woman to conceive children. It was not known if those "Last Ones" could in fact still develop and mature in the womb and thus be born. Thankfully they could, however, in a world so full of death and sorrow, maybe it was best that they shouldn't...

He told her how he had found them along with a few other refugees fleeing City 17 on the outskirts of town and how he had taken them both in, as his neighbors helped the others. He was not the most handsome man around, a far cry even from her late husband he presumed, but he had a good heart and eventually won her over and loved the child as his very own. And she in turn resumed her late husband's duties and became a leader herself, commanding teams from their make shift head quarters and on rarer occasions actually leading squads on mostly hit and run missions, ambushes and sabotage.

One day the Combine came to their sleepy little town and soldiers poured in. There was a fire fight the likes he had never seen before, but the leaders of the rebel faction, including his late wife, were captured and executed right before their very eyes, to serve as an example to the others not to fight against the New World Order. She had been a martyr and upon her death and eventual burial, he had promised to carry on what she had started. He was not a leader himself, but he learned how to fire a weapon well, although a shotgun did not take much skill, you just point and pull the trigger...

"Do you miss Mommy?" little Emily asked when he was through telling the tale.

"More than you will ever know, Precious.", he said as he tried to sniff back the tears and kissed her forehead lovingly. He turned the picture of her mother, still in it's frame, but the glass long gone, more towards them on the nightstand and gazed upon the most beautiful woman in all the world...

"Are we ever going to see her again?", she asked innocently.

He pulled her into him, embracing her tightly, more tightly then ever before and she had no idea why. It felt like he was crushing every bone in her little body. "Very soon kiddo, we will both see her very soon..."

Eventually he let her go and she saw him with tears running down his face. "Why are you crying for Daddy?", she asked curiously. "Wont you be happy to see Mommy again?"

He almost actually laughed at that, as sad as that was, she was just so innocent, she had no idea... "Because I love you.", he said finally as he tried to wipe the tears away, but more replaced them.

"I love you too, but why are you crying for?", she pressed, not understanding. However, she was not meant to understand, she was still just a child. It was not her fault she was brought up into a world of hellish violence and slavery of untold proportions. An era that very well might mark the extinction on an entire species, humanity...

He heard foot falls and his name called from the stairwell. "The Combine are gathering outside the shield walls and barricades! Something big is about to happen!"

>Jerrid nodded. "I will be right down.", he replied over his shoulder and that was enough for the other member of the resistance who went back down stairs.<p>

"Daddy, what's going on?", she asked frightened.

"Nothing for you to worry about, Princess... Daddy just has to go outside with his friends for a bit..." He wiped his nose with a finger and made sure she was tucked securely into bed, even tucking her feet in. He then took the soft little stuffed kitty he had gotten for her long ago and made it dance to the delight of the sleepy child and then nestled it into her warm arms and neck.

Standing up, he reached to his right outer thigh and unfastened the leather strap to his holster, pulling out his revolver, the same revolver of his late wife. "I am going to leave this with you for the night while I am away. You remember how to use it right?", he asked, but was going to give her a quick refresher anyway. "Remember how Daddy showed you...", he said as he gripped it with both hands and then over exaggerated by pulling, cocking and locking the hammer back with both thumbs, something she as a child with tiny hands would have to do."

She nodded and he very carefully uncocked the hammer, as she gripped the overly large pistol. The weight was heavy in her little hands, but she had been taught how to use it at a very young age, especially after the death of her mother. "Keep this with you at all times, just like Fluffball, ok?", the father said more than asked, mentioning her stuffed kitty's name. She again nodded and he leaned over and brushed her long wavy brown hair from her big beautiful eyes, the same hair as her beautiful mother's and kissed her forehead one final time before he left, his tears falling onto her face.

"Try to get some rest and Sweet Dreams Princess... Make sure you open this door for no one..., not even me..." He flashed his keys to show her and shut the door, locking it before he left. He wished he could take her to the church, but it was overly crowded as it was with refugees, plus that might be the first target hit... She was left all alone with only the stuffed kitty and her mother's revolver to keep her company, little slivers of light from the moon showing through the boarded up and nailed splintered slats of the wooden shutters...

End
file.